

Trans-Canada Pipe Lines

Mr. Coldwell: It will be recollected, Mr. Speaker, that on February 27, 1951, which is almost seven years ago, when the incorporation of Trans-Canada Pipe Lines was originally introduced in the house by Mr. Decore, the then Liberal member for Vegreville, he told us that it was planned to use an all-Canadian route, and with the total amount of gas consumed in Canada complete control would be assured to this country. From the outset we of the C.C.F. wanted this pipe line and other gas and oil lines in Canada to be built under public ownership and control so these great resources, their transportation, and provision for their use, might be entirely under the ownership and control of the people of Canada through this parliament of Canada.

However, the house decided that the bill should go to the standing committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines, and on March 6, 1951, Mr. Frank A. Schultz, representing the company, appeared before the committee. At page 10 of the minutes and proceedings of the committee for that day we find Mr. Schultz said this:

The second consideration was that it should be an all-Canadian project with the total Canadian gas transported over all-Canadian lines and that 100 per cent of the consumption would be in Canadian cities.

He gave other evidence to indicate that the project would run into no difficulties in attaining the necessary finances.

The only two points I make at this juncture are, first, that it was to be all-Canadian; all gas would be available to Canadian consumers, and there would be no difficulty in financing the line. We do not know where the government stands as far as permission to export gas by this company is concerned. The minister of trade and commerce of the day, Right Hon. C. D. Howe, also had no doubt with respect to the financing of the project.

On March 18, 1955, after certain extensions of time had been granted to the company—several extensions having already been granted—he wrote a letter which was tabled in this house, in which he said:

All studies indicate that the line is capable of being financed privately and it has been decided to defer construction for one year and let matters take their course.

In March, 1956, the company was back again, and this time there was under discussion a proposal from the minister of trade and commerce, as hon. members who were here at the time will recollect, for the formation of a crown corporation to build the northern Ontario or unproductive section of an all-Canadian pipe line under terms which he indicated, which would be leased to Trans-Canada Pipe Lines Limited for its sole use.

[Mr. McIlraith.]

I say this to the hon. members of the government. That proposal was very severely and very harshly criticized by the then leader of the opposition, Hon. George Drew. He stated, and I am using his own words, that parliament was being asked—

—to set up a crown corporation which will use public funds to assist financial interests in the United States in establishing effective control over one of our major resources. I doubt if there is any precedent for such a proposal.

Now, that was the situation when the pipeline bill was approved later last year and it is the situation today, which the people of Canada believed the Conservative party, if elected to power, would rectify. Giant United States interests were and are behind this particular project. They were put on record by the then leader of the opposition, Mr. Drew, and by others on many occasions during the debates which followed. Those of us who were here will have very vivid recollections of that, and they are still the powers behind Trans-Canada Pipe Lines.

May I remind the government of the words of Sir John A. Macdonald as reported on page 494 of volume 1 of the debates of 1880 to 1881. I am making one change in reading Sir John's words; I shall change the word "railways", as I did two years ago, to the words "gas companies" in this quotation. Otherwise it will be a verbatim statement of Sir John A. Macdonald made in parliament when discussing the building of the transcontinental railway. This is what he said:

I can trust to the intelligence of this house—

I wish, incidentally, that I could do likewise.

I can trust to the intelligence of this house and the patriotism of this country, I can trust not only to the patriotism but to the commonsense of this country to carry out an arrangement which will give us all we want, which will satisfy all the loyal, legitimate aspirations, which will give us a great, a united, a rich, an improving, a developing Canada, instead of making us tributary to American laws, to American "gas companies", to American bondage, to American tolls, to American freights, to all the little tricks and big tricks that American "gas companies" are addicted to.

And who is there among us who has read the record right through from the days of the Teapot Dome scandals right down to the present day who is unaware of the tricks which the American gas and oil companies have been guilty of from time to time?

I think we should still remember those words, because the major interests behind Trans-Canada Pipe Lines are still powerful United States corporations which from time to time have been the subject of criticism and investigation in the United States because of anti-social practices. It was in line with their tradition that the Conservative party